

Bob's Blog—April 10th, 2007

Hello Everyone, I am getting anxious for spring, aren't you? By the Way, the official creation of DSI will be effective on Thursday, May 17th, one day short of LIEP's Fifteenth birthday on May 18th, isn't that a coincidence? It took longer than usual for official publication because one of the ordinances creating the department is over 160 pages long. The ordinances will appear in the April 16th *Legal Ledger*, which may turn out to be one of the biggest ever! Save a copy for the departmental archives.

Thanks again to everyone who has worked to help make DSI a reality. Don't forget to check out the new DSI Homepage at <http://www.stpaul.gov/depts/liep/dsihomepage.html>

1.) 2008 Budget Input (Suggestions) Meeting on April 18th. There is a lot going on, but very importantly, please remember to reserve Monday, April 18th, from 1:00 p.m. until 3:00 p.m. for the 2008 budget planning meeting with Mayor Coleman and Financial Service Director Matt Smith. The Mayor is meeting with all departments prior to the start of the budget process to get your ideas and input on how we can have a successful process. The meeting is not mandatory, but I hope you will be able to join us to better understand the challenges that lay ahead.

Along this line, there have been some questions about the origin of the policy to not pay for bottled or filtered water. The recommendation to cut out paying for the bottled water came from an employee last year who pointed out to the Mayor that the City was spending about what it cost for one FTE to pay for bottled water and that cutting out the expense would save someone's job. That's the kind of creative suggestions that the Mayor is soliciting. By the way, there is still time to contribute to the fund to keep our water filtering system. Just send your contribution to Sheila.

2.) The Fire Chief Agreed to co-locate Fire Engineering to the Commerce Building when the Fire inspectors move to the 6th floor in June. This recommendation was included in the Fire Audit and we are pleased that the Chief has acted so quickly in this area to improve communication and coordination for our customers. Remember to check out the audit on the City's website.

3.) We are in the process of hiring six new staff in the coming weeks. An opening for one Animal Control Officer is already posted and in a few weeks we will be posting tests for three Fire Inspection Aids, and a LIEP Inspector I. We are also working with the City Attorney's Office to hire an appointed unclassified paralegal person to work on legislative hearings and the vacant building initiative. The Animal Control officer is already included in the 2007 budget; the other positions are being financed from revenues to be generated by the new Fire C of O program. Other additions are also being planned for this summer such as the Soil and Water specialist.

4.) Employee Recognition. What are your thoughts about employee recognition? What should we do and what form should official and unofficial recognition take? This is a topic I would like the AFSCME LMC to discuss, but I am interested in hearing from everyone in the department about your thoughts and suggestions. LIEP used to have an employee of the year and various individual and team achievement awards. Should we do that type of recognition again or should we consider other approaches. Let me know your ideas and comments.

5.) Open Office Hour remains in effect on Monday mornings from 9:00 to 10:00. Be the first to stop in and you'll get a doughnut or at least a cookie or piece of banana bread.

6.) LeeAnn Turchin is working on the summary of the results of the nine employee focus groups that she conducted over the last two and half weeks. Her report will be done soon. Next, we are holding the stakeholder focus groups on the 18th, 24th and 25th of April. These will be conducted by private consultant Ellery July.

Thanks for your continued support! Keep those ideas and suggestions coming my way...

